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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR KPAO OIIIP OPRC PGOV PREL PK

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: FEBRUARY 12, 2010

Summary: Coverage of two powerful bomb explosions in Bannu (NWFP) that killed 15 people including nine policemen dominated front-pages on Friday morning. National Security Adviser Jones's Pakistan visit garnered extensive coverage, his meeting with President Zardari, PM Gilani, and other senior officials, and trip to Swat valley were highlighted in nearly all newspapers and TV networks. Media quoted President Zardari as urging U.S. to "focus on stabilizing democracy and economic development in Pakistan," and conveying "concerns" over enhanced screening measures at U.S. airports. Pakistan's premier business daily, "Business Recorder," published a by-liner article by Deputy Secretary Treasury Wolin, titled, "Realizing Pakistan's economic potential". Dr. Aafia's issue remained a burning question in media, and papers reported the GOP's assurance that it would put up a "good defense" for Dr. Aafia at the next stage of her trial by a U.S. court, and her sister, Fauzia announced to "stage a sit-in protest in front of the U.S. Consulate in Lahore on February 16." "Daily Times," quoted a senior U.S. defense official (on condition of anonymity) as claiming that the U.S. military is planning to set up new training centers in Pakistan. "Nation" reported that the VOA is still broadcasting its one-hour Urdu service from its original station in the U.S. though "without proper editing." "Business Recorder," reported the "captivating performance" of the American Voices that is visiting Pakistan these days under the auspices of U.S. Embassy in Islamabad. Vice President Biden's statement about Pakistan, made in an interview with CNN, that "it is not a completely functional democracy," was also prominently displayed. Commenting on the subject, "The News," reminded Mr. Biden that "it was your own government that propped up the military dictatorship which preceded our current flawed democracy for the duration of its rule, almost a decade, and that democracy is not something you turn on like a light bulb." Editorializing the militant attacks in Khyber Agency, "Daily Times," observed that "their purpose is to spread the front as far and wide as possible in order to create gaps and holes in the security cordon. This is what asymmetrical warfare is all about." End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: 15 Killed - DPO Critically Injured: Twin Bombings Devastate Bannu Police - "Dawn" (02/12)

"Fifteen people, seven policemen among them, were killed and 25 others wounded in Bannu on Thursday evening when two suspected suicide bombs ripped through Police Lines. District Police Officer Iqbal Marwat received serious injuries in the second attack and was stated to be in critical condition. Official sources said that even as the bodies and the wounded were being evacuated from the scene, the second bomber blew himself up, causing more casualties."

News Story: U.S. Urged To Focus On Stabilizing Democracy, Economy
- "Dawn" (02/12)

"The government urged the United States on Thursday to focus its help on stabilizing democracy and economic development in Pakistan. The government's point of view on sectors the U.S. assistance should concentrate was conveyed to National Security Adviser James Jones during a meeting with President Asif Zardari, Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin, Chief of Army Staff Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani and Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir.... Also on Pakistan's wish-list was expediting disbursement of \$2 billion in deferred payments of the Coalition Support Fund and pushing the Friends of Democratic Pakistan forum to fulfill their pledges.... Jones welcomed Pakistan's decision to accept India's invitation for talks. He expressed the hope that lowered tensions with India would help the country focus on anti-extremism and counter-insurgency efforts on the western borders."

News Story: Zardari Calls For Transfer Of Drone Technology To Pakistan - "Daily Times" (02/12)

"President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday called for the transfer of drone technology to Pakistan for use by its own security forces against the Taliban for 'wider public acceptability.' The president said the U.S. drone attacks on Pakistani territory undermined national consensus on the war against terrorism. Zardari expressed these views during a meeting with U.S. National Security Adviser General James Jones.... According to a press release, the president said Pakistan welcomed U.S. declarations of support for Pakistan's security and economic development, and emphasized that continued support must be based on mutual respect and trust."

News Story: U.S. National Security Adviser Visits Swat - "Daily Times" (02/12)

"U.S. National Security Adviser (NSA) Gen James Jones and his delegation visited Swat on Thursday, residents said. Jones is the first top American official to visit the region since three US military trainers were killed in a vehicle-borne suicide attack in Lower Dir district on February 3, Mingora residents told 'Daily Times.'"

News Story: Government Writ Restored In Troubled Areas, Owais Tells U.S. Team - "The News" (02/12)

"NWFP Governor Owais Ahmad Ghani in Peshawar on Thursday briefed a U.S. delegation about the measures taken so far to curb terrorism and militancy and the security situation in the region. 'We have successfully restored the writ of the government in the affected areas, both in the Frontier province and the FATA, and now our focus is on consolidation of the system of governance and well-being of people,' the governor told the U.S. team, which was led by National Security Adviser, General James Jones, that called on the governor, said an official handout."

Opinion: Realizing Pakistan's Economic Potential, an op-ed by Neal S. Wolin, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Treasury in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (02/12)

"Fifteen months ago, Pakistan stood on the brink of a financial crisis. During a time of unprecedented turmoil in financial global markets, Pakistan's unsustainable fiscal policies, made worse by the world-wide spike in food and fuel prices, produced a dangerous set of consequences: accelerating inflation, a collapse in the rupee, and a profound downturn in the Pakistani economy.... Pakistan's economic situation has stabilized, but during the current period, Pakistan must build the foundation for an economy that is not merely stable, but prosperous; an economy that provides the security, educational opportunities, health care and modern infrastructure.... In addition to the substantial resources the U.S. has contributed directly and through the IMF and World Bank, we have also committed our best resource - our people. Complementing the work of U.S. professionals already providing development assistance in Pakistan, the U.S. Treasury Department advisors will soon begin providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank. Through these professionals, we hope to help Pakistan develop the tools to become financially independent by strengthening revenue

collection, debt management, and capital markets - and by increasing the transparency of the financial system. In my meetings with senior officials in Islamabad today, the economic challenges facing Pakistan will be at the core of the agenda."

News Story: Government Vows Good Defence For Aafia Siddiqui - "Dawn" (02/12)

"The government assured the National Assembly on Thursday it would put up a 'good defence' for Pakistani neuroscientist Aafia Siddiqui even at the next stage of her trial by a U.S. court where a jury last week found her guilty of attempting to murder American soldiers in Afghanistan."

News Story: Dr. Aafia's Sister To Stage Sit-In Protest At U.S. Consulate On 16th - "Daily Times" (02/12)

"Dr. Fauzia Siddiqui, sister of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, will lead a students' rally and stage a sit-in protest in front of the U.S. Consulate on February 16 (Tuesday), as part of her countrywide campaign for her sister's release."

News Story: U.S. Military Planning To Set Up New Training Centers In Pakistan - "Daily Times" (02/12)

"The U.S. military is planning to set up new training centers inside Pakistan where American special operations trainers would work with Pakistani forces close to the Afghan border battle zone, a senior defence official said. The new centers would supplement two already operating in Pakistan, and they would be used to accelerate and expand the training of Pakistani forces considered key to rooting out Al Qaeda leaders hiding along the mountainous border, the official said."

News Story: VOA Continues Using PBC Equipment For Urdu Service - "The Nation" (02/12)

"While the Radio Pakistan management has blocked VOA Pashto-language service, after reportedly receiving threats against airing American propaganda, the VOA is still broadcasting its one-hour Urdu service from its original station in the U.S. though without proper editing, well-placed PBC sources told 'The Nation.'

News Story: U.S. Consulate General Brings Broadway to Lahore - "Business Recorder" (02/12)

"In a captivating performance on February 9, U.S. performing arts group, American Voices, joined Pakistani students and artists to transform the Ali Auditorium in Lahore into a Broadway theatre. According to U.S. Embassy Spokesman, show capped four days of theatre workshops and rehearsals conducted by the visiting U.S. artists during a week-long visit to the city."

News Story: Pakistan Is My Biggest Worry: Biden - "Daily Times" (02/12)

"U.S. Vice President Joe Biden said on Wednesday that his greatest concern was not Afghanistan, not Iraq, nor the Iranian nuclear crisis, but Pakistan. 'I think it's a big country. It has nuclear weapons that are able to be deployed. It has a real significant minority of radicalized population,' said Biden said in an interview with CNN. 'It is not a completely functional democracy in the sense we think about it, and so that's my greatest concern.'"

Editorial: Change The Record, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/12)

"U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden has been busy waving stereotypes around again. Pakistan has once again been on parade as the most dangerous country in the world. We have nuclear weapons. We are not 'a completely functional democracy' (at least he is right about that) and we have 'a real significant minority of radicalized population.'... Turning to the issue of democracy and its poor functionality - well yes, true. But don't forget Mr. Biden that it was your own government that propped up the military dictatorship which preceded our current flawed democracy for the duration of its rule, almost a decade, and that democracy is not something you turn

on like a light bulb."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: 5 Americans Wounded In Attack At U.S. Base - "Business Recorder" (02/12)

"A suicide bomber wearing an Afghan border policeman's uniform blew himself up Thursday at a U.S. base near the Pakistani frontier, wounding five Americans, an Afghan official said."

News Story: Taliban Vow Guerrilla Warfare Against Afghan, NATO Troops - "Daily Times" (02/12)

"The Taliban vowed on Thursday to fight back with a 'hit and run' guerrilla campaign against Western and Afghan forces preparing to storm one of their key strongholds in southern Afghanistan. Thousands of U.S. Marines and NATO and Afghan soldiers have massed around the town of Marjah, a Taliban bastion in Helmand province, poised to launch one of the biggest operations against the insurgents since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion."

News Story: Can't Guard Every NATO Tanker, Says Balochistan IG - "Daily Times" (02/12)

"Balochistan Inspector General of Police Javed Ali Shah Bukhari said on Thursday that the police did not have the capacity to guard every NATO tanker passing through the province to the neighboring Afghanistan. Talking to a private TV channel, he said the reports regarding the presence of the Afghan Taliban Shura in Quetta were baseless and far from reality."

News Story: Afghans Fear Taliban Booby Traps As NATO Assault Nears - "Daily Times" (02/12)

"Some Afghans were too afraid to leave their homes on Thursday for fear of bombs planted by the Taliban ahead of a US-led NATO offensive on their last big stronghold in the country's most violent province. Some 500 people from the town of Marjah, which is expected to be the focus of the assault, and the Nad Ali district gathered in the Helmand provincial capital to discuss the impending operation with elders."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: PAF To Get 14 F-16s by June: Rao - "The Nation" (02/12)

"Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Rao Qamar Suleman Thursday said that Pakistan will take delivery of 14 F-16 jet fighters from America by June this year. Briefing the visiting Senate's Standing Committee on Defence and Defence production about operational preparedness and air defence system, PAF chief said that more new jet fighters and missiles would be inducted in the fleet. The Air Chief also informed the Standing Committee about skills of PAF in recent war against terrorism in Swat and Malakand."

News Story: India Doesn't Want To Talk On Kashmir - "Daily Times" (02/12)

"While composite dialogue is the only way forward for the resolution of all outstanding issues and India has offered Pakistan talks, New Delhi 'does not want to talk on Kashmir', Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani said on Thursday, the AFP news agency quoted Gilani as saying on Thursday."

News Story: Engagement To Help Resume Composite Dialogue: FO - "The News" (02/12)

"Pakistan on Thursday said the process of engagement with India would lead to the resumption of composite dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues. Addressing a weekly briefing, Foreign Office spokesman Abdul Basit said Pakistan had yet to respond to India's suggestion of the proposed Foreign Secretary level talks.... He said dialogue was the only way forward and hoped that engagement with India would be result-oriented to resolve all outstanding disputes between the two countries."

News Story: Pakistan's Anti-Terror Moves Led To Resumption In Talks:

Antony - "Daily Times" (02/12)

"Pakistan has taken necessary action against terrorists, which is a positive development, Indian Defence Minister A.K. Antony said on Thursday. The Minister was talking to the media on the sidelines of an Asian Security Conference (ASC) organized by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA). Even though we are not fully satisfied, but resumption of dialogue is in the interest of both the countries."

News Story: Secretary-Level Talks Raise Hopes Of Thaw In Pak-India Relations - "Dawn" (02/12)

"Sanity has finally prevailed and one can safely say that the foreign secretary-level talks in the last week of February is the first serious effort since the dastardly incident of Mumbai, raising hopes of a thaw in relations between the two South Asian nuclear-armed neighbors. The talks, which have been encouraged if not midwifed by Washington, certainly raise the prospect of ending the prolonged diplomatic standoff between the two countries. But there is still a long way to go before one could expect a breakthrough on important issues confronting the two countries. Analysts said the immediate challenge is to agree on a structured framework for discussions."

News Story: Govt. Has No Option But To Implement Court Verdict: SC - "The News" (02/12)

"A three-member bench of the Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that the government has no option except implementing the court order in letter and spirit. The bench, headed by Justice Javed Iqbal, said that it would decide the missing persons' case within two weeks and would order action against people held responsible in the case. Justice Javed Iqbal observed the independence of judiciary is linked with the Constitution and law. He ruled out the impression that the apex court can't enforce its decisions. He said an impression is being created in the media that the judiciary is interfering in the administrative matters while the fact is that we have to realize the institutions to render their responsibilities."

ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: Technical Assistance To CCP: U.S. FTC Team Due In March To Explore Possibility - "Business Recorder" (02/12)

"An assessment team of Federal Trade Commission (FTC) of the United States would visit Pakistan to explore possibility of providing technical assistance to the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP). In this regard, CCP Chairman Khalid Mirza has visited the US FTC to share Pakistan's experience with its US counterpart and gathered extensive know how on policy planning initiatives and other matters related to promoting competition. The US FTC assistance would strengthen the Pakistani agency for protection of consumers for carrying out studies on scientific methods for moving against cartels. Sources told Business Recorder here on Thursday."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: Iraq Expels 250 Former Blackwater Guards - "Dawn" (02/12)

"The Iraqi Interior Minister Jawad Bolani said on Thursday he had expelled 250 ex-employees of the American security firm Blackwater, whose guards were charged with killing unarmed civilians in Baghdad."

News Story: Iran Now A Nuclear State: Ahmadinejad - "The News" (02/12)

"President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad boasted Iran was now a nuclear nation on Thursday as he marked the 1979 Islamic revolution, prompting the West to warn his regime would soon be slapped with new sanctions. 'One day they said we cannot enrich uranium, but with the resistance of our leader, nation and with the help of God, the Iranian nation has become nuclear,' Ahmadinejad said. 'They (Americans) want to dominate our region but the Iranian people will never let them do that,' he said in a speech at Tehran's Azadi (Freedom) Square before a crowd of hundreds of thousands."

EDITORIALS/OPIINIONS

Editorial: Roots of Anti-Americanism in Pakistan, an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (02/12)

"The U.S. continues to act as a master rather than a friend, something resented by many enlightened nationalists in Pakistan, who otherwise strongly oppose extremism and militancy. What is needed by the Obama administration to improve U.S. image is to fully support democracy, respect Pakistan's sovereignty and make only those promises, which the U.S. can really fulfill, irrespective of who controls Washington. Only time will show if the U.S. is capable of keeping the promise made by Robert Gates, of having a long-term approach to Pakistan that reassures Pakistanis that 'we are a long-time, reliable ally for Pakistan; we're going to be there with them and for them, going into the future. And it's in every aspect, politically, economically, and so on.'"

Editorial: Khyber Attacks, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/12)

"Three consecutive incidents in which the security forces sustained casualties along with civilians in two different areas of the Khyber Agency in a single day, suggest that the militants may be weakened, but they are far from down and out.... Tirah Valley in the Khyber Agency has long been used as a launch pad by terrorist as well as criminal elements.... While one would like the military to adopt better tactics, these attacks should not be seen as an anomaly or entirely unexpected. Their purpose is to spread the front as far and wide as possible in order to create gaps and holes in the security cordon. This is what asymmetrical warfare is all about."

Editorial: Shifting Theatre, an editorial in the populist, often sensational English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/12)

"The theatre of war seems to have shifted for the moment to Khyber Agency, where there has been a flurry of action.... The Taliban continue to add to their ranks by roping in more and more groups across the country. It is thought that factions of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and other forces from Punjab already work with them. The result of course is that the Taliban have a greater capacity than would be expected to carry out new attacks. The opening up of new fronts of course also puts more pressure on the army."

Editorial: Another Attack, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (02/12)

"About 15 security personnel, including a brigadier and a pilot, and seven civilians lost their lives in a gun attack, a suicide bombing and a helicopter crash.... The question arises: how was the suicide bomber able to travel on the roads and ambushed an army rescue party searching for bodies? In fact, why were the agencies not able to gain prior intelligence of this suicide bombing and arrest the perpetrator at the initial stage where the attack was planned? It seems our security didn't even have any prior warning. It is evident that there has been a serious lapse of intelligence and this raises the question: did the terrorists have inside help?"

Opinion: U.S. Trainers For Pakistan Armed Forces: An Issue Of Serious Concern, an op-ed by Dr. Inayatullah Faizi in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (02/12)

"The killing of three U.S. soldiers in the Lower Dir suicide bombing last week has exposed, for the time, the presence of American military personnel in Pakistan, which has become a matter of much concern among the masses. Nobody knows for how long these soldiers were present in the area and what were their number and real objectives. The insufficient explanation by the ISPR regarding the presence of U.S. military personnel itself has given rise to many suspicions. Do our armed forces need training assistance from their worst enemy. In fact, all of our governments, including the incumbent one, depend upon financial largesse from Washington and this money is not without shameful strings attached to it. The deployment of U.S. military personnel in Pakistan is also part of

those conditions. Unless and until, our ruling class change its priorities, Pakistan cannot gain respect and prestige in the comity of nations."

Opinion: A New Understanding for U.S. & Pakistan, an op-ed by Imtiaz Gul in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (02/12)

"Several Pakistani Generals, including Kayani, believe the praise by Mullen and the subsequent request by Obama for additional counterinsurgency funding reflects a new understanding among the coalition, of Pakistani concerns and constraints. The language and vocabulary emanating from Washington and London toward Islamabad has changed in recent months, a prerequisite for creating greater trust among the coalition partners, according to Pakistan Generals. Let us see it the changed vocabulary can work in the coming months."

Opinion: The U.S. Presence in Afghanistan, an op-ed by Zafar Hilaly in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/12)

"The reason why we feel reassured by the presence of big brother U.S. around the corner in Afghanistan is the fear that the Taliban may actually prevail if succor in the form of someone with an open cheque book and appropriate weaponry was not available to compensate for the destabilization caused to society and the economy... The American presence in Afghanistan is of little positive value to the battle that we are waging against extremism, indeed to the contrary. Besides, of what use is an army, be it the strongest in the world, when confronted by the invasion of an idea?"

Opinion: Vienna Convention And Sovereign Equality, an op-ed by Mohammad Jamil in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/12)

"The U.S. has lodged a strong protest with the government of Pakistan on the arrest of some U.S. embassy employees and impounding of their vehicles in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi, negating the Vienna Convention.... One should ask the Americans whether Pakistan's top diplomats and other employees stationed in Washington are allowed take such 'liberties' as the American diplomats and their staffers are indulging in so freely."

Opinion: The Verdict, an op-ed by M.A. Niazi in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/12)

"The verdict in the case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui showed to all and sundry the flawed nature of the American justice system, particularly the much-vaunted trial by jury, which is supposedly incorruptible and leads to the rule of law. The American justice system is supposed to be one of the things for which the War on Terror is being fought, but the trial itself shows it as defective, as allowing the fate of a human being to be placed in the hands of a jury of his or her peers, a jury which may well be influenced by reasons of state.... Dr. Aafia and her fate represent why Pakistanis are less than enthusiastic about supporting the U.S. in its War on Terror. This also explains why the Americans are determined to punish her. She symbolizes the might of the USA, and its relentlessness in punishing all its enemies, even if they are in the form of frail mothers of three. And it shows that it will not only punish women but also children it has decided to make an example of. Dr. Aafia is being tortured, and her kids have disappeared, so that Americans may escape the effects of terror."

Opinion: Pakistani Taliban Apologists, an op-ed by Gulmina Bilal Ahmad in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/12)

"The Pakistani Taliban, specifically the TTP, are individuals with a narrow understanding and interpretation of religion as well as limited world view. They openly declare that their ideology is to enforce their brand of Islam in Pakistan and declare that their objectives are to 'struggle against the Pakistani Army and NATO forces in Afghanistan.'... It is baffling to note how anyone can support and justify the TTP while at the same time proclaim to be champions of democracy, rule of law, equality before the law and most of all justice. Or do they mean justice TTP-style?... The dictionary defines confusion as a 'state where one is unable to

place oneself correctly in the world by time, location and personal identity.' This is perhaps the best way to describe the Pakistani Taliban apologists who tragically are present in the country's political, social, media and academic arena. Until this segment of society is tackled, efforts for peace will remain half-baked."

Opinion: Coming Full Circle, an op-ed by Cyril Almeida in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (02/12)

"Until the public was convinced that the TTP was the enemy and had to be defeated, there was never the possibility of military success: locally, the population could have shielded the militants; nationally, the public could have pressured the government to halt the fighting. Look, though, at the history of the country over the last 30 years and ask yourself this: who has sided with the Islamists and militants the most? Would not generals Zia and Musharraf top that list? (Don't scoff at the Musharraf claim: after all, the Islamist parties controlled two provinces and had their largest share in parliament in history on his watch.) So it's all well and good for the generals to claim that 'public support' to fight the militants wasn't always there - but then they should also be honest and explain the army's role in eliminating the possibility of that support existing earlier. Yes, the reality is that the Pakistan Army will need to be at the forefront of the effort to defeat militancy in this country. But don't confuse needing them with believing them. They may have earned our gratitude for fighting recently; trust, though, is a separate matter altogether."

Editorial: U.S. Abuse Exposed, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/12)

"The protection an independent judiciary offers to citizens in any democratic country were highlighted again in the case of Britain where London's Court of Appeals forced the government to disclose information relating to the case of former Guantanamo Bay detainee Binyam Mohammad - an Ethiopian national who was a British resident.... The British government had maintained that revelations of CIA renditions and torture would destroy intelligence cooperation with the U.S., but justice prevailed and the British court ruled that all the details should be revealed as there was 'an overwhelming public interest.'"

Editorial: Government And Military Leadership's Willingness For Unconditional Dialogue With India, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (02/12)

"Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani admitted in a public speech the other day in Islamabad that India is not willing to have Kashmir in the agenda of Pak-India talks.... Even Indian Water Commissioner had to admit that during his recent visit that Pakistan is getting less than its share of water.... With this backdrop what forced our government and military leaderships to agree on unconditional talks with India when it is not willing to talk about our jugular vein Kashmir.... India's war designs are not hidden from any one as it goes on testing long range Agni missiles.... India hurls threats and is bent upon committing aggression against us while American Defense Minister tells us that India will lose its patience if a Mumbai like incident reoccurred.... In these circumstances it is better to reject Indian offer for dialogue unless it includes core issues of Kashmir and water on the agenda."

Editorial: Pakistan-India Talks, an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (02/12)

"Pakistan has decided to accept the Indian offer for secretary level talks while declaring that the talks will be held on Kashmir and water issues as without these issues the dialogue will be meaningless.... Indian hostility on Kashmir in contravention of the UN resolution on Kashmir and hurling accusations on Pakistan is the biggest hurdle to peace in the region."

Editorial: Talks with India: government and military leadership's joint strategy, an editorial note in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (02/12)

"A joint military and government strategy on talks with India has

been decided upon in a meeting chaired by President Zardari. It has been decided that talks would not be conditional and that Kashmir and water issues would be part of the agenda.... The government and military are right in deciding that talks should not just be on terrorism but other issues as well.... It can be said with certainty that Pakistan has always abided by the Indus Waters Treaty and India should not have an issue on including Kashmir and water issues in the agenda if, as the Indian Water Commissioner said in Pakistan, India is also sincere [in adhering to the treaty]."

Editorial: Pak-India Bridges, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (02/12)

"One good turn can lead to another and there were a couple of healthy turns taken on the path to a Pakistan-India dialogue on a single day.... It's been a positive renewal - even if we are starting from scratch all over again - and decision-makers on both sides must avoid another false spring by committing themselves unconditionally to the ideal of peaceful coexistence.... There is no need at this stage to go over the long list of issues that divide the two neighbors. What everyone should keep reminding everyone else is that these disputes cannot be addressed without earnest engagement.... If history is a guide, dialogue is the only way that can help reconcile two seemingly impossible positions. In Pakistan, and maybe in India was well, there is this fear that the other side will somehow be able to twist the talks to its unfair advantage. This betrays a lack of trust not only in those who represent the people on the dialogue table but also in the public's own ability to influence a discussion."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson